

ABC NIGHTLINE
23 August 1984

KOPPEL: Good evening. I'm Ted Koppel, and this is Nightline. Andrei Sakharov is almost certainly a production of the KGB, which may be one of the world's most-feared secret police organizations. But when it comes to making movies, subtlety is obviously not its strong point. (Sakharov film)

UNIDENTIFIED ANNOUNCER: What could be more pleasant than a nice chat?

KOPPEL: What, then, is the purpose of the film? We'll examine that question with Ladislav Bittman, a former Czech intelligence officer whose job was creating disinformation, with Soviet expert William Hyland and with Tatiana Yankelovich, Dr. Sakharov's stepdaughter. On May 2 of this year, Andrei Sakharov began a protest hunger strike because the Soviets refused to allow his wife to leave the country for needed medical treatment. Almost nothing has been seen or heard of the Sakharovs since, except for couple of black-and-white photographs that were sold to a German newspaper a number of weeks back. Recently, that same newspaper, Bild, acquired some film which ABC News in turn purchased from them. We're going to look at a big chunk of that film now. The narrative, which we've had translated, is largely self-explanatory, but watch for these points: hunger strike--Sakharov is seen eating; his poor health and hers--she is seen smoking, shopping, driving, he reading, chatting and walking; to date scenes, magazines that are clumsily inserted wherever possible, and to diminish the impact of exile--the Sakharovs cannot leave Gorky--the viewer is treated at the beginning of this film to a fulsome travelogue. Take a look.

VOICE OF TRANSLATOR: Since January 1980, academician Andrei Sakharov and his wife, Yelena Bonner, have been living in Gorky by the decision of the authorities. At 214 *Gargaren Prospect, they occupy a four-room apartment on the ground floor. Sakharov was assigned the post of senior research worker, and their family budget, including his life-long academician salary, is now 800 rubles a month. They rent a car which they take turns to drive. When they first moved in, the academician took an active part in making the apartment comfortable and in improving the apartment lot courtyard outside. On the whole, the couple spend most of their time together, just the two of them. They go out for walks in the town and for drives, and although they keep to themselves, they are glad to welcome visitors at their home, both relatives or simply friends. Academician Sakharov's son, Dimitri, came on a visit from Moscow to stay with his father. And here's his daughter, Tatiana, and his granddaughter, *Marana, taking a walk in the park and through the town. Sakharov himself never leaves Gorky, but until recently, Bonner had this right and made regular visits to Moscow. According to reports in the Soviet press, Bonner established contacts with the U.S. Embassy and planned to take refuge there so as to blackmail the authorities into granting her request by putting pressure on them. She would have been in much the same position as were recently the group of Pentecostals who had lived in the embassy for over five years. To prevent Bonner from taking such actions in the future, she has now been temporarily banned by the authorities from leaving Gorky and at present she goes to local prosecutor's office to give explanations. In her everyday life, Yelena Bonner looks a little more dynamic than her husband. It's usually she who fills up the car and she who drives a lot about the town, meeting acquaintances and friends. Like all wives, Bonner has taken the burden of house sitting upon herself. Her husband,

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